



# 2020 Consolidated Annual Performance and Evaluation Report (CAPER)

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City of Meriden  
Economic Development Department  
142 East Main Street  
Meriden, CT 06450

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## **CR-05 - Goals and Outcomes**

### **Progress the jurisdiction has made in carrying out its strategic plan and its action plan. 91.520(a)**

This could be an overview that includes major initiatives and highlights that were proposed and executed throughout the program year.

The City of Meriden is an entitlement jurisdiction, receiving an annual allocation of Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program funds through the US Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). These funds help the City address the housing, community and economic development objectives outlined by HUD, which include, but are not limited to: affirmatively furthering fair housing, development and preservation of affordable housing, public facility and infrastructure improvements, economic development, and vital services for low- to moderate-income (LMI) and special needs populations. The City and its residents continue to be negatively affected by the COVID-19 pandemic, however the City was able to successfully implement many of its activities to accomplish the goals established in its annual plan. These accomplishments are highlighted below.

**Affordable Housing:** Through the City's Neighborhood Preservation Program (NPP), there was 1 LMI household assisted with housing rehab. Unfortunately, there were 4 other applications for the loan rehab program that were denied/tabled due to the applicants not meeting certain program requirements. The City however does have several other projects in various stages of development including two that are tentatively approved and nearing finalization of a contract, and another two projects that have been approved for lead paint risk assessment. Offered as a public service, the City also assisted 37 LMI households with subsistence assistance, which were emergency rent/security deposits and utility payments. This activity was vital in providing affordable housing, and helping LMI households avoid becoming homeless. Code enforcement activities also went to benefit residents in low/mod tract areas in the City.

**Public Facility & Infrastructure Improvements:** An estimated 59,395 persons in downtown LMI areas benefitted from improvements to sidewalks that provided for a safer walking environment. This activity involved sidewalks on Sherman Street and Bunker Street, which are two important pathways in the inner city area that needed improvements.

**Public Services:** The City and its partners provided several public services which helped to improve the quality of lives for the special needs and LMI population in Meriden. A total of 15,559 persons were served in PY 2020. Services for special needs groups included senior services, services for persons with disabilities, victims of domestic violence, persons experiencing substance abuse and persons at-risk or experiencing homelessness. Services for LMI persons included youth enrichment and prevention, health and mental health services, employment services and childcare services. For activities that helped individuals avoid homelessness, there were 95 persons who received homeless services while staying at homeless shelters. These services were at the Meriden Warming Center, operated by the Coalition on Housing & Homelessness, and the New

Opportunities Shelter NOW facility and included medical services, referrals, help to access benefits, help with attaining documents, and housing assistance.

Economic Development: There were a total 96 persons who had employment training. These trainings were offered by Literacy Volunteers and Women and Families Center Open DOHR. The Kuhn's Group Supported Employment program also provided employment training to individuals with intellectual disabilities to perform litter patrol at City parks although the actual jobs to be performed were put on hold due to COVID-19.

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**Comparison of the proposed versus actual outcomes for each outcome measure submitted with the consolidated plan and explain, if applicable, why progress was not made toward meeting goals and objectives. 91.520(g)**

Categories, priority levels, funding sources and amounts, outcomes/objectives, goal outcome indicators, units of measure, targets, actual outcomes/outputs, and percentage completed for each of the grantee’s program year goals.

Goal	Category	Source	Indicator	Unit of Measure	Expected – Strategic Plan	Actual – Strategic Plan	Percent Complete	Expected – Program Year	Actual – Program Year	Percent Complete
1A. Expand Public Infrastructure	Non-Housing Community Development	CDBG	Public Facility or Infrastructure Activities other than Low/Moderate Income Housing Benefit	Persons Assisted	25000	0	0.00%	5000	0	0.00%
1B. Improve Public Infrastructure Capacity	Non-Housing Community Development	CDBG	Public Facility or Infrastructure Activities other than Low/Moderate Income Housing Benefit	Persons Assisted	25000	59395	237.58%	5000	59395	1187.90%
1C. Improve Access to Public Facilities	Non-Housing Community Development	CDBG	Public Facility or Infrastructure Activities other than Low/Moderate Income Housing Benefit	Persons Assisted	25000	0	0.00%	5000	0	0.00%
2A. Preserve Existing Homeowner & Rental Hsg Units	Affordable Housing	CDBG	Homeowner Housing Rehabilitated	Household Housing Unit	25	1	4.00%	5	1	20.00%
2B. Provide Code Enforcement in LMI Neighborhoods	Affordable Housing	CDBG	Housing Code Enforcement/Foreclosed Property Care	Household Housing Unit	25000	59395	237.58%	5000	59395	1187.90%
2C. Provide for Homeownership Assistance	Affordable Housing	CDBG	Homeowner Housing Added	Household Housing Unit	20					

2C. Provide for Homeownership Assistance	Affordable Housing	CDBG	Direct Financial Assistance to Homebuyers	Households Assisted	40					
3A. Provide Supportive Services for Special Needs	Non-Homeless Special Needs	CDBG	Public service activities other than Low/Moderate Income Housing Benefit	Persons Assisted	110000	14753	13.41%	22000	14753	67.06%
3B. Provide Vital Services for LMI Households	Non-Housing Community Development	CDBG	Public service activities other than Low/Moderate Income Housing Benefit	Persons Assisted	110000	806	0.07%	22000	806	3.66%
4A. Provide for Small Business Assistance	Non-Housing Community Development	CDBG	Businesses assisted	Businesses Assisted	50					
4B. Planned Repayment of Section 108 Loan	Non-Housing Community Development	CDBG	Other	Other	1	1	100.00%	1	1	100.00%

**Table 1 - Accomplishments – Program Year & Strategic Plan to Date**

**Assess how the jurisdiction’s use of funds, particularly CDBG, addresses the priorities and specific objectives identified in the plan, giving special attention to the highest priority activities identified.**

The City has identified public facilities and infrastructure improvements, affordable housing development and preservation, economic development and public services for low- to moderate-income (LMI) and special needs populations as its priorities. Funds from CDBG were used to address these high priority needs in Meriden, and a number of objectives were completed as a result of programming funded by CDBG grant funds. The PR07 Drawdown Report reported the following fund expenditures for PY 2020 for each priority.

Expand/Improve Public Infrastructure & Facilities: \$193,864 (20%)

Preserve & Expand Affordable Housing: \$348,792 (37%)

Public Services: \$216,045 (23%) Note that the City has a waiver to spend up to \$220,000 for public services each year.

Economic Development: \$101,134 (11%)

Administration: \$83,504 (9%)

*Overview of Goals Accomplished*

1A. Expand Public Infrastructure: The City had a goal for 5000 to be assisted, however there were none reported. This is because goal number 1A & 1B are similar and this should be reported with goal 1B in the future.

1B. Improve Public Infrastructure Capacity: The City had a goal for 5000 to be assisted, and an estimated 59395 in low/mod areas were serviced. This is intended to be an area-wide low/mod benefit.

1C. Improve Access to Public Facilities: The City had a goal for 5000 to be assisted, however there were none reported. The City originally intended to assist My City Kitchen with kitchen improvements, however this activity was not completed and the City will have to identify a new activity for public facility improvements.

2A. Preserve Existing Homeowner & Rental Hsg Units: The City had a goal to assist 5 LMI households with the NPP housing rehab loan program, however only 1 LMI household was assisted. There were 4 other applicants who were denied for various reasons, however there are another 4 in various stages of service. The City anticipates this goal to be met in the upcoming program year.

2B. Provide Code Enforcement in LMI Neighborhoods: There was a goal to assist 5000 residents in LMI areas with code enforcement activities, and the City exceeded this goal with activities that benefit 59395 in low/mod areas.

2C. Provide for Homeownership Assistance: This goal is a long-term goal in the 5-Year Consolidated Plan, and there were no goals for this in the first year 2020 Annual Action Plan.

3A. Provide Supportive Services for Special Needs: There was a goal to assist 22000 special needs persons, and the City funded programs that assisted 14753 special needs persons. Unfortunately, this goal wasn't met however the City understood subrecipients took extra steps to provide precautions for clients during the pandemic. Also, some activities were delayed or did not start in the program year.

3B. Provide Vital Services for LMI Households: There was a goal to assist 22000 LMI persons, however the City only reported 806 assisted. Unfortunately, some of the activities that would have met the goal were not completed or beneficiary data was not recorded in time.

4A. Provide for Small Business Assistance: This goal is a long-term goal in the 5-Year Consolidated Plan, and there were no goals for this in the first year 2020 Annual Action Plan. Instead the City will focus on repaying the Section 108 loan.

4B. Planned Repayment of Section 108 Loan: The City made a loan repayment of \$101,133.75 in PY 2020. This Section 108 loan repayment to HUD was for the demolition and environmental remediation of the former Insilco Factory H building site.



## CR-10 - Racial and Ethnic composition of families assisted

Describe the families assisted (including the racial and ethnic status of families assisted).  
91.520(a)

	CDBG
White	7,619
Black or African American	4,729
Asian	8
American Indian or American Native	18
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	8
<b>Total</b>	<b>12,382</b>
Hispanic	6,945
Not Hispanic	8,567

Table 2 – Table of assistance to racial and ethnic populations by source of funds

### Narrative

**DATA NOTE:** The data above was drawn from the beneficiary accomplishments from the PY 2020 PR-03 CDBG Activity Summary Report. The table above does not include a category for people that identify as “other” or “multiple races” nor does it include the beneficiaries of projects determined to have an “area benefit” to the community, such as public improvements to sidewalks and streets in low/mod income areas. Therefore, the data in the above table do not necessarily match the numbers of all people actually served by the CDBG program.

Approximately 38% of CDBG funding went towards assisting Black or African Americans. All other minority races accounted for less than 1%. For persons who identified as Hispanic, over 44% of CDBG funding went towards assisting this group.

According to the most recent 2015-2019 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, 78.1% of the population was White, followed by 10.0% for Blacks and 1.7% for Asians. Persons who identified ethnically as Hispanic were 29.2% of the citywide population. It should be noted that the Asian population is small, but with the exception of Asian persons, the City adequately assisted minority groups with CDBG programs.

### *Housing Needs Assessment*

The Needs Assessment in the City’s 2020-2024 Consolidated Plan, assesses if any racial and ethnic group by income category has a disproportionate need in the area with regards to housing problems, severe housing problems and cost burden. Households with housing problems are those that reside in units lacking complete kitchen and plumbing facilities as well as overcrowding (more than one person per room)

and cost burden (spending 30% or more of income on housing per month). Households with “severe housing problems” are those that reside in units lacking complete kitchen and plumbing facilities as well as severely overcrowded homes (more than 1.5 person per room) and severe cost burden (spending 50% or more of income on housing per month).

According to the Needs Assessment, for regular housing problems, Asian households experience a disparity in very-low income levels (30-50% AMI). For severe housing problems, Asian households again experience a disparity in very-low income levels (30-50% AMI). For housing cost burden, there were no minority households experiencing a disproportionate need.

In PY 2020 the City had two programs that assisted LMI households with affordable housing. For housing rehab there was 1 LMI household assisted, and the household was Black or African American. For the emergency subsistence program which provided emergency rental/security deposits and utility payments, there were a total of 37 households assisted with 12 Black or African American (32%) and 25 Hispanic households (68%) assisted. When comparing the housing needs assessment with housing assistance provided for minority groups, the City adequately assisted Black or African American and Hispanic households, but there is a need to assist LMI Asian households. While the Asian population is small, it is the City’s intention to assist all minority groups regardless of size.

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## CR-15 - Resources and Investments 91.520(a)

### Identify the resources made available

Source of Funds	Source	Resources Made Available	Amount Expended During Program Year
CDBG	public - federal	1,167,963	943,339

Table 3 - Resources Made Available

### Narrative

In PY 2020 there was \$1,167,963 in CDBG funds made available to the City. According to the PR07 Drawdown Report the City expended \$943,339. These funds went towards public improvements to sidewalks, affordable housing rehab, public services for special needs and LMI households, homeless prevention activities and economic development activities. The City continues to experience some delays due to safety precautions taken in response to COVID-19, however it is working to spend all remaining funds with service providers.

#### CARES Act Funds:

The City received a total of \$1,045,687 in CDBG-CV grant funds to fund activities that prevent, prepare for and respond to the COVID-19 pandemic. In PY 2020, the City expended \$205,887 in CDBG-CV funds towards economic development to assist small businesses that were negatively affected by the pandemic. This program was the Capital for Change program which provides small business emergency grants to assist businesses in Meriden as they cope with the financial hardships due to the coronavirus.

### Identify the geographic distribution and location of investments

Target Area	Planned Percentage of Allocation	Actual Percentage of Allocation	Narrative Description
Central Downtown Area	100	100	Investments continue to be focused on the downtown area due to highest concentration of LMI

Table 4 – Identify the geographic distribution and location of investments

### Narrative

CDBG investment in Meriden is targeted towards downtown neighborhoods, which contain low- to moderate-income households, sub-standard housing conditions, and a concentration of vacant or underutilized properties. The City recognizes that the revitalization of its downtown neighborhoods is linked to the revitalization of its economy as a whole. It also continues to be the location of many of the non-profits and other groups that provide vital services to the area's residents.

The percentage of funds shown in the geographic distribution table is an approximation, however the City has several mechanisms to ensure funds are directed towards the Central Downtown Area. Included in

the Central Downtown Area funds are the public improvements, housing rehab, and the Section 108 repayment projects. Also included are public service activities that are specifically located in the downtown, or predominantly serve the residents of downtown.

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## Leveraging

**Explain how federal funds leveraged additional resources (private, state and local funds), including a description of how matching requirements were satisfied, as well as how any publicly owned land or property located within the jurisdiction that were used to address the needs identified in the plan.**

CDBG funds is a primary source of funds that helps to leverage other monies and human capital on an annual basis in the City of Meriden. All City funded organization through the CDBG program have a budget that includes funds that are non-CDBG related but are still used to help provide vital services to the City of Meriden and its citizens. Program partners include small and large nonprofit agencies; local community organizations; and other local government agencies and departments. CDBG funds received by these various organizations are often used as leverage to help secure other local grants.

In recent program years, funding that was spent on the issuance of forgivable loans for the Meriden Match Facade Improvement Project helped leverage private funds. In order for applicants to receive the CDBG funds, they were required to provide a funding match totaling between 25%-50% of the total project cost. This helped leverage approximately \$20,000 in funding from the recipients of the Facade Improvement funds.

Funding of the Rehab Administration Program, Code Enforcement, and the Inner City Sidewalk improvement activities also help to maintain the momentum of the significant Federal and state financial investment that has occurred in the downtown area of Meriden in the past 5-6 years. This other assistance has come from the Federal Government in the form of EPA assessment and cleanup grants, from the State of Connecticut in the form of Brownfields Cleanup grants & loans and a rebuilt train station, and numerous municipal monetary outlays.

### *Publicly Owned Land or Property Used to Address Needs in the Plan*

The City is actively involved in redevelopment efforts in its downtown that will provide new affordable housing as part of mixed-use development centered on an updated transit hub. Brownfield sites and vacant buildings – including 116 Cook Avenue, 1 King Place, 69 East Main Street, 11 Crown Street, and 121 Colony Street Rear – are being or have been assessed for environmental contaminants, remediated, repurposed and transferred to private partner organizations to be developed into usable, mixed-used developments with housing and economic development opportunities. The City is also assisting in completing site re-use planning projects by working with landowners of vacant or underutilized parcels in the downtown area.

## CR-20 - Affordable Housing 91.520(b)

Evaluation of the jurisdiction's progress in providing affordable housing, including the number and types of families served, the number of extremely low-income, low-income, moderate-income, and middle-income persons served.

	One-Year Goal	Actual
Number of Homeless households to be provided affordable housing units	0	0
Number of Non-Homeless households to be provided affordable housing units	5	38
Number of Special-Needs households to be provided affordable housing units	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>38</b>

Table 5 – Number of Households

	One-Year Goal	Actual
Number of households supported through Rental Assistance	0	37
Number of households supported through The Production of New Units	0	0
Number of households supported through Rehab of Existing Units	5	1
Number of households supported through Acquisition of Existing Units	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>38</b>

Table 6 – Number of Households Supported

**Discuss the difference between goals and outcomes and problems encountered in meeting these goals.**

In PY 2020, the City assisted 1 LMI homeowner with housing rehab through the City's Neighborhood Preservation Program (NPP). While this does not reach the goal of 5 housing units rehabbed for the program year, the City does have several projects in various stages of development including two that are tentatively approved and nearing finalization of a contract. There are another two projects that have been approved for lead paint risk assessment. Unfortunately, there were 4 applications for the loan rehab program that were denied/tabled due to the applicants not meeting certain program requirements.

The City also assisted 37 LMI households with emergency subsistence payments in PY 2020. This assistance was administered by the Salvation Army's Comprehensive Emergency Assistance Program and the New Opportunities Rental Assistance/Security Deposit Program. Activities included financial assistance for the first or past due rent, security deposits, and/or utility payments. These funds are paid

directly to the landlord or property manager and the goal is to help LMI households dealing with crisis and economic hardship avoid homelessness.

**Discuss how these outcomes will impact future annual action plans.**

While the City did not reach its goal for assisting 5 LMI households with housing rehab, the City is continually working to identify eligible households for the program. The City’s NPP program denied 4 applications due to applicants not meeting certain program requirements. There are however several projects in various stages of development that would help to satisfy the established goal and the City anticipates it will report these in the upcoming program year.

Housing rehab remains a priority for the City, and the City will continue to fund this activity in future Annual Action Plans.

**Include the number of extremely low-income, low-income, and moderate-income persons served by each activity where information on income by family size is required to determine the eligibility of the activity.**

Number of Households Served	CDBG Actual
Extremely Low-income	14
Low-income	18
Moderate-income	6
<b>Total</b>	<b>38</b>

**Table 7 – Number of Households Served**

**Narrative Information**

In PY 2021 the City assisted a total of 38 LMI households with rental rehab (1 LMI household) and emergency rental/utility assistance (37 LMI households). The number of households served by program and income were:

Homeowner housing rehab: 1 low-income household.

Emergency Rental/Utility Assistance (subsistence payments): 14 extremely low-income, 17 low-income, 6 moderate-income. This emergency assistance was provided to LMI households to help them avoid homelessness.

*Worst Case Needs*

Those with worst case needs are individuals or households at-risk of or experiencing homelessness and/or are extremely low-income. Extremely low-income renter households are at imminent risk of homelessness as they lack the funds to maintain housing during emergency and times of crises. CHAS data reported in the City’s Needs Assessment from the 2020-2024 Consolidated Plan estimates that there are approximately 1,440 extremely low-income renters (0-30% AMI) in Meriden that are severely cost burdened (households paying 50% of income towards housing costs).

To address this need, the City will continue to prioritize and work with partners that assist these groups, such as the Salvation Army and New Opportunities which help with emergency rental subsistence payments. In the program year, 14 extremely low-income households were assisted with these activities.

There were no extremely low-income households assisted with rental rehab, however if these households are identified for the NPP program, the City will help enroll them for service to maintain the condition of their housing. Households with extremely low-incomes lack the funds to properly upkeep their homes which may promote unsafe conditions and contribute to situations that lead to homelessness.

The City did not specifically report any persons with a disability in affordable housing programs, however if a household with a disability is identified for assistance in one of the housing programs, the City will make all necessary accommodations within reason to meet the needs of the household.

Finally, to address homelessness in Meriden, the City helped fund the Coalition on Housing and Homelessness and New Opportunities Shelter NOW for services at the homeless shelters. These services are designed to help individuals and families find support, social services, medical, job and housing. The Women and Families Center's Project Reach program helps youth at-risk of homeless with applying for benefits, job training and transitional housing services.

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## **CR-25 - Homeless and Other Special Needs 91.220(d, e); 91.320(d, e); 91.520(c)**

**Evaluate the jurisdiction's progress in meeting its specific objectives for reducing and ending homelessness through:**

### **Reaching out to homeless persons (especially unsheltered persons) and assessing their individual needs**

The City allocated resources towards the provision of housing and counseling services to individuals who are either homeless or are at risk of becoming homeless. These services include the Women and Families Center's "Project Reach" which directly benefits runaway, homeless and at-risk youth ages 12-24 by seeking out youth where they congregate and providing supportive services to build self-sufficiency and identify stable, long-term housing. The program also provides transitional housing services to young adults, economic training, and independence through job readiness programs and education.

The Meriden Warming Center from Coalition on Housing & Homelessness provides outreach and warming shelters during extreme weather periods.

Shelter Now, operated by New Opportunities, Inc., provides shelter to homeless persons while also supporting a portion of the full-time case management position. This position provides support and coordinates service assistance for Shelter residents. Services including implementing individual evaluations, working with participants to develop activities to reach their goals, providing necessary intervention and cultivating and maintaining program links with area social service agencies, medical providers and appropriate support programs, helping to get residents into treatment, securing a job and enrolling in school.

The Meriden-Wallingford Chrysalis DV Self-Sufficiency Program provides outreach and support to women and children at risk of homelessness due to domestic violence.

Additional outreach and support is offered through the Meriden Soup Kitchen. In addition to providing hot food at no cost, the Meriden Soup Kitchen offers regular blood pressure and wellness checks; direct access to SNAP and CT HUSKY enrollment; winter clothing; books; and direction to City services five days per week.

### **Addressing the emergency shelter and transitional housing needs of homeless persons**

The Shelter NOW program, operated by New Opportunities, Inc., provides assistance to shelter residents via intake, case management and supportive services necessary to make the transition from temporary housing to non-emergency assistance or complete self-sufficiency. Shelter NOW has seen an increased number of residents requiring shelter services due to the scarcity of relevant job opportunities and an increased number of foreclosures/evictions affecting its population. Activities at the shelter include assessing the situation of clients at the time of entry and developing a plan for family intervention,

treatment, job placement, school enrollment and other long/short term goals. Shelter NOW served 69 homeless persons in PY 2020. New Opportunities is continuing work to expand the facility to increase capacity and services.

**Helping low-income individuals and families avoid becoming homeless, especially extremely low-income individuals and families and those who are: likely to become homeless after being discharged from publicly funded institutions and systems of care (such as health care facilities, mental health facilities, foster care and other youth facilities, and corrections programs and institutions); and, receiving assistance from public or private agencies that address housing, health, social services, employment, education, or youth needs**

Case management and life-skills services were offered by Meriden-Wallingford Chrysalis, Shelter NOW, and the Women and Families Center's Project REACH to help low-income individuals and families avoid becoming homeless.

The Salvation Army Comprehensive Emergency Assistance Program and the New Opportunities Rental Assistance/ Security Deposit Program offer immediate housing-related financial aid to households who may be at risk of homelessness or are facing severe housing cost burden. The goal of these programs is to keep families and individuals in their homes and ameliorate the financial constraints that can lead to short and/or long-term homelessness. Eligible families may be assisted with utility bills, rent or free basic needs. During PY 2020, there were a total of 37 LMI households assisted from the Salvation Army and New Opportunities with emergency financial assistance to prevent homelessness.

Also funded in PY 2020 was the Meriden Farmers Market Doubling Dollars Program, which provides coupons to eligible participants in an effort to stretch their funds and offset other basic living needs costs such as housing. Finally, other food programs such as Joy Ministries' Bread of Life program which offer door-to-door services and Change the Play Summer Meals program also provide food for LMI residents and children. These programs help to offset costs that can go towards other basic living needs.

The Women and Family Center's Project REACH at Robyns House and WYSH House also works with vulnerable youth that are at-risk or already homeless. Project REACH staff provide services that include needs assessment and individualized case management, supportive counseling, referrals and links to services, education, and aftercare services.

Kuhn Employment Opportunities has an employment program that helps persons with a disability with employment which helps them to earn an income. These activities help LMI disabled persons to be economically sustainable.

The Meriden Housing Authority has found that providing rental subsidies to households below 80% of the median income level for the area is the most cost effective and practical means to address pending homelessness. The Meriden Housing Authority is continuing work to secure additional Section 8 Housing Assistance vouchers as they become available so that more individuals can be served.

**Helping homeless persons (especially chronically homeless individuals and families, families with children, veterans and their families, and unaccompanied youth) make the transition to permanent housing and independent living, including shortening the period of time that individuals and families experience homelessness, facilitating access for homeless individuals and families to affordable housing units, and preventing individuals and families who were recently homeless from becoming homeless again**

The Shelter NOW Program begins working with individuals and families immediately upon intake to assess goals and develop a plan for transitioning out of temporary/emergency housing as quickly as possible given existing circumstances. This work is undertaken by an onsite case-manager.

The Meriden-Wallingford Chrysalis Self-Sufficiency Program provides help to income-eligible residents who need assistance with a range of issues, including employment, security deposits, job training, homelessness prevention and free furniture for those transitioning into new, independent housing. The program focuses on assisting survivors of domestic violence in navigating challenges faced when building their new lives from violence.

The Women and Family Center's Project REACH at Robyns House and WYSH House also works with unsheltered teens to begin the transition into permanent, stable and safe housing. Project REACH staff provide services that help homeless youth overcome their current situation and return to self-sufficiency. Some of the services provided include assessment and individualized case management, supportive counseling, referrals and links to services, education, and aftercare services as youth move from homelessness to safe and stable housing.

## **CR-30 - Public Housing 91.220(h); 91.320(j)**

### **Actions taken to address the needs of public housing**

The Meriden Housing Authority (MHA) manages 221 public housing units and 875 Housing Choice Vouchers in the area. It's mission is to provide safe, decent, healthy and a responsive environment for its tenants while maintaining the fiscal integrity of the Authority.

MHA continues to undertake a multi-year effort to modernize and improve its aging housing stock. As reported in MHA's most recent PHA plan, several projects completed in the last decade include the Chamberlain Heights 122-unit development renovation in 2010, the 24 Colony Street mixed-use new construction development with 63 units that was completed in 2016, and Yale Acres Model Buildings to increase their energy efficiency utilizing geo-thermal and solar energy systems in 2016. Just recently in 2018, Phase 1 Meriden Commons, a mixed-use 75-unit residential development was completed and as of the prior year is now fully occupied. Phase 2 with 76 mixed-use units was recently completed in September 2019.

Developments started recently were Yale Acres Redevelopment Phase I (162 units) and the Phase II expansion with 10 units. These developments have a development schedule of 22 and 18 months are currently in development. The MHA is closing on \$1.6 million for veteran's supportive housing at the Hannover Place Housing development with 10-units reserved for veterans at-risk of homeless. Silver City Apartments, a 41 residential unit development started in the prior program year is in a 20-month development schedule.

Developments in planning are Yales Acres Common Building and Warming Center, which is the Phase III in the modernization of Yales Acres. Plans include a community meeting room, gymnasium, heated pool, fitness center, child care center, community kitchen and more. Also planned are the 143 West Main Street mixed-income development with 45-units, and the Maple View Apartments located in the Transit Oriented District area in downtown.

### **Actions taken to encourage public housing residents to become more involved in management and participate in homeownership**

The MHA has monthly meetings with residents to encourage them to share their concerns with management and provide feedback as to operations. Residents are also invited to review and make comments to PHA plans.

The MHA has a Family Self-Sufficiency (FSS) Program that is designed to assist Section 8 and public housing residents achieve economic independence. FSS is a HUD initiative and supports families by providing services and referrals for educations, career counseling, financial managements, job training and job placement services. A majority of participants receive a savings account that grows as the family's earned income rises, and upon completion they receive the accumulated funds in their account. This money may be used to purchase a home, pay for higher education, start a business or pursue other personal goals.

FSS participants make a contract with the program to achieve goals which will help them towards self-sufficiency. These goals include, but are not limited to getting a GED or high school diploma, acquiring a driver's license, becoming debt-free, completing home buyer education, attending or graduating college, purchasing a car, rebuilding credit, saving money and buying a house.

The MHA also operates a comprehensive homeownership program that provides qualified FSS Section 8 participants with the education and support necessary to achieve the dream of owning their own home. Successful graduates can convert their Section 8 Voucher to a Homeownership Voucher. To qualify for this program the participant must have a Section 8 Voucher and live in the City of Meriden.

Finally, the City continued to fund the Neighborhood Housing Services of New Britain Financial & Housing Classes for Housing Authority Tenants. This program provides public housing residents with home buyer education.

### **Actions taken to provide assistance to troubled PHAs**

The Housing Authority of the City of Meriden is a high performing agency, therefore no corrective action/assistance from the City of Meriden was required during PY 2020. The Housing Authority is not considered a troubled PHA.

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## **CR-35 - Other Actions 91.220(j)-(k); 91.320(i)-(j)**

**Actions taken to remove or ameliorate the negative effects of public policies that serve as barriers to affordable housing such as land use controls, tax policies affecting land, zoning ordinances, building codes, fees and charges, growth limitations, and policies affecting the return on residential investment. 91.220 (j); 91.320 (i)**

The City of Meriden has collaborated with the Meriden Housing Authority through HUD's Choice Neighborhoods initiative to drastically overhaul the Mills Memorial Housing residences in the City's downtown neighborhood. This development is the Meriden Commons Phase I & II developments, and has substantially rehabilitated 151 units of housing in place of the Mills dilapidated public housing facility. Other ongoing developments and planned developments by the MHA are summarized in the PHA section CR-30.

The Economic Development Department and Planning Department work closely with developers of multi-family housing to ensure that affordable housing is included in new construction of housing units. The City's Transit Oriented Development (TOD) zoning district that encompasses much of downtown Meriden is designed to promote denser housing and commercial uses surrounding the new train station, which has been serviced by the newly launched CT Rail since June 2018. Furthermore, the Planning Department is currently undertaking a close look at housing, both affordable and market rate, as part of the update of the City's Plan of Conservation and Development. Initial data points show that Meriden in fact has the second highest number of affordable units (4,077) in New Haven County, according to the CT Department of Housing. This number equates to 13.41 % of the City's housing stock.

### **Actions taken to address obstacles to meeting underserved needs. 91.220(k); 91.320(j)**

The primary obstacle to underserved needs is funding. Connecticut's budget realities are dire, and funding cuts continue to have an impact on local municipalities, nonprofits, and other local service providers. The City of Meriden itself has seen its own budget pressures related to maintaining sufficient public services without increasing taxation levels, while in an environment of lowered state and federal assistance and increasing non-discretionary costs that must be paid.

The City of Meriden was fortunate to see a modest increase in CDBG funding over the past several years, however the need for grants across all priorities identified in the Consolidated Plan continues to increase as well. In order to best allocate these funds, the Economic and Community Development Office worked closely with the Meriden City Council Human Services Committee and other City departments in an effort to avoid duplication of services and direct funding to the program and geographic areas of greatest need. Funded activities are reviewed annually in terms of timeliness and accomplishments to ensure that the greatest amount of need is being met with each CDBG award. In some cases, City staff have recommended decreased funding levels for activities that either underperform or do not submit required reporting and invoice materials in a timely manner so that funds can be shifted to more impactful activities. The City also continually explores alternative activities and programs that could be funded in

order to better serve those in need.

**Actions taken to reduce lead-based paint hazards. 91.220(k); 91.320(j)**

Lead-based paint hazards are evaluated on a case-by-case basis in all of Meriden's Neighborhood Preservation Program (NPP) homeowner rehabilitation loans. Funding provided to City staff through the Housing project will in part cover housing inspections, and will address lead paint hazards as needed. Homes issued CDBG-backed loans through the NPP with children younger than six years old residing in them will be tested for lead based paint hazards if any work is to be performed that would pose a potential hazard to occupants. In the event children younger than six years old are exposed to lead poisoning they will be referred to the Connecticut Children's Medical Center "Lead Treatment Program.

The City refers cases to the Connecticut Children's Medical Center "Lead Treatment Program (LTP) to reduce residential lead hazards for low-income children under six years old. The LTP program has access to several federal funding programs that will be used to conduct risk assessments and inspections of housing units within targeted communities, provide lead hazard control education to families and property owners within targeted communities and provide property owners with financial assistance to rehabilitate housing units in targeted communities with identified lead hazards.

Lead-based paint hazards are considered when drafting program guidelines and reviewing potential projects, including improvements to commercial facilities. None of the City's Public Facility projects in Program Year 46 (PY 2020) involved the rehabilitation of housing units, and were thus not subject to the requirements set forth at 24 CFR 91.220(k) or 91.320(j).

**Actions taken to reduce the number of poverty-level families. 91.220(k); 91.320(j)**

Public Service activities are aimed directly at improving the quality of life of residents in Meriden including reducing the number of families in poverty. The City and its partners provided a large number of public service activities which assisted over 15,500 LMI persons in PY 2020. Public services for special needs groups included senior services, persons with disabilities, victims of domestic violence, and persons experiencing substance abuse. Public services for LMI persons included youth enrichment and prevention, health and mental health services, food banks, housing services, employment services and literacy programs.

The NOW Security Deposit Program and Salvation Army's Assistance Program provided immediate financial relief to families facing financial hardship that could lead immediately to housing instability and further financial peril. Eviction from housing is one of the greatest contributors to cycles of poverty, as housing instability impacts employment, childhood education and general well-being of the households affected. These programs help preclude short term financial troubles from turning into long term poverty and homelessness. Together, these programs assisted 37 LMI households.

The Kuhn Employment Opportunities activity also helps those with disabilities to earn an income and

provide a vital service to the community by cleaning up certain city parks. This program provided employment training and jobs to 11 disabled individuals in PY 2020.

**Actions taken to develop institutional structure. 91.220(k); 91.320(j)**

The Community Development Office's merger with the City's Economic Development Department helped to improve internal and external coordination and collaboration; better target CDBG awards related to housing and economic development; and increase inter-office working knowledge of the CDBG Program.

CDBG administrative funds contribute to the administration of the CDBG Program and help ensure that the City meets the statutory and regulatory objectives outlined as a condition of participation in the program. The Economic & Community Development Department staff continue to take the following actions to ensure that needed services are coordinated between the City, subrecipient organizations carrying out CDBG activities, and the public who benefit from the CDBG-funded activities:

- Post CDBG Program materials and announcements, such as the availability of the Annual Plan, CAPER, and RFP documents in the local newspaper and on the City's website [www.meridenct.gov](http://www.meridenct.gov)
- Distribute copies of all materials to the general public, non-profit organizations, and elected officials when available or requested.
- Hold one-on-one meetings with sub-recipients to discuss quarterly report accomplishments and overall programming, as needed.
- Provide referrals to appropriate City departments and local organizations, such as the Neighborhood Preservation Program and the Meriden Housing Authority.

**Actions taken to enhance coordination between public and private housing and social service agencies. 91.220(k); 91.320(j)**

The City of Meriden, the Meriden Housing Authority (MHA), local services providers and private housing developers continue to progress through coordinated efforts to provide housing, services, and economic opportunities in the City's downtown area. The demolition of the Mills Memorial Housing Development, which was finished in the previous program year, required the City and the MHA to work closely together. This partnership ultimately enabled the distressed public housing complex to be demolished, and has allowed for the construction of the Meriden Commons development. This multi-phased development incorporates over 150 units of housing, the majority of which are affordable or direct replacement units for the Mills development. This working relationship between the City, MHA, and social service providers continues as all work in unison to explore options that will improve the quality of life for Meriden residents.

MHA will continue to reduce the barriers to affordable housing by providing Section 8 vouchers and to provide first-time homeowner loan assistance aimed at transitioning residents from public housing into the private housing market. The City's Economic & Community Development Department will work with developers of new rental housing construction in the targeted TOD area to ensure that historic tax credits



and other state and federal programs leverage adequate affordable housing opportunities for residents.

Through the City's Notice of Funding Application (NOFA) process, the City provides CDBG program basics, describes eligible activities and uses of funds, and target populations. The City also provides the priority needs as identified in the Consolidated Plan and program goals and objectives. While this process intended to accepted requests for proposals, each year the application process helps to build the capacity of service providers in the CDBG program.

### **Identify actions taken to overcome the effects of any impediments identified in the jurisdictions analysis of impediments to fair housing choice. 91.520(a)**

The primary tool communities have for identifying contributing factors for these barriers to fair housing is the Analysis of Impediments to Fair Housing Choice (AI). The overall goal of the AI is to review and assess impediments to fair housing within Meriden.

In 2020, an AI report was developed in conjunction with the 2020-2024 Consolidated Plan. It evaluates Meriden's current fair housing legal status, and its and public and private fair housing programs and activities and provides recommendations for fair housing initiatives critical to ensuring equal housing opportunity within the City. The following impediments to fair housing related were identified:

- Concentration of Sub-Standard Housing
- Shortage of Public Housing Funds
- High Number of Cost Burdened Renter Households
- Lack of Vacant Developable Land
- Older Housing Stock
- Shortage of Affordable Housing
- The City Faces a Growing Aging Population

#### *Actions Taken to Address Impediments*

In PY 2020 the City took many steps to address the impediments identified in the 2020 AI.

To address substandard housing the City's low/mod areas the City provided code enforcement activities that benefit these low/mod areas, as well as administer the NPP program which provided low interest loans for housing rehab. The NPP program also addresses the need to preserve older housing stock in the City.

To address the shortage of public housing funds, the City works closely with the MHA to work on developments in the central downtown areas. Working together maximizes the funds being used in these areas.

The City recognizes that cost burden is one of the largest housing problems in the City. This is particularly

true to low-income renters. The City funded two organizations to provide emergency rental/security deposits and utility payments for LMI renters, which also helped these households avoid homelessness. This also addresses the shortage of affordable housing in Meriden.

To address the growing elderly population in Meriden, the City has made it a priority to provide vital public services to help this special needs group. These activities include food banks, health services and elderly employment services.

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## **CR-40 - Monitoring 91.220 and 91.230**

**Describe the standards and procedures used to monitor activities carried out in furtherance of the plan and used to ensure long-term compliance with requirements of the programs involved, including minority business outreach and the comprehensive planning requirements**

The City of Meriden's Economic and Community Development Office is responsible for the overall administration and implementation of the City's CDBG Program. The City maintains records of program accomplishments, funding spent, population served, housing units rehabilitated, and other information in the HUD-provided IDIS reporting system.

Per the requirements of 24 CFR Part 91.230, the City monitors all CDBG subrecipients and City Departments to ensure that all Plan activities are carried out in compliance with program requirements. The City evaluates the performance of each sub-grantee and City Department based on the specific milestones outlined in each project proposal. Progress towards those goals is reported on a quarterly and on an annual basis. Department staff also conducts annual on-site visits to CDBG funded Public Service Agency to ensure compliance with applicable regulations and to review progress toward goals outlined in their application for funding. The intent of these monitoring policies and procedures is to identify potential discrepancies with contract standards and program requirements before they become larger issues.

Department staff work in cooperation with other city staff, Council, and the Mayor to ensure the success of the program. Staff assists, for example, by identifying needs, advising on program guidelines, and overseeing activities funded by the CDBG program.

### **Citizen Participation Plan 91.105(d); 91.115(d)**

**Describe the efforts to provide citizens with reasonable notice and an opportunity to comment on performance reports.**

The City of Meriden follows its HUD approved Citizen Participation Plan which guides and encourages input from citizen for its CDBG program. The Economic and Community Development Office is constantly working to ensure that residents of Meriden are aware of the process and able to review and comment on decisions at their discretion.

The draft PY 2020 CAPER was noticed in the *Meriden Record Journal* and draft CAPER was posted on the City's Economic Development and Community Development website.

**PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD:** Citizens are invited to review and make comments on the draft CAPER. A copy of the CAPER is available in the Office of Community Development, Room 134, City Hall, 142 East Main Street, Meriden, CT 06450 as well as on the Community Development website at: <https://www.meridenct.gov/government/departments/economic-development/community->

[development/](#). Written comments on the CAPER will be accepted for 15-days beginning September 13, 2021 through September 27, 2021 until 4:30PM.

**PUBLIC HEARING:** A virtual public hearing will be held via Microsoft Teams on September 27, 2021 at 5:00 PM to review and discuss the draft CAPER. For more information on how to participate at the public hearing please email Lucy Diaz, Grants Administrator at [ldiaz@meridenct.gov](mailto:ldiaz@meridenct.gov), or call (203) 630-4151 between 9:00 AM and 5:00 PM.

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**CR-45 - CDBG 91.520(c)**

**Specify the nature of, and reasons for, any changes in the jurisdiction’s program objectives and indications of how the jurisdiction would change its programs as a result of its experiences.**

This PY 2020 CAPER reports on the first year of the City of Meriden’s 5-Year 2020-2024 Consolidated Plan (Strategic Plan) and there are currently no changes to the overall strategies identified in the Plan. The priority needs and goals continue to serve as the basis of the 5-Year Strategic Plan.

While the needs and goals remain the same, the City may identify new activities to fund that may further the already established goals of the 5-Year Strategic Plan. When those opportunities arise, the City may make adjustments to the goal outcome indicators as necessary to properly adjust for those changes in the number of persons or households assisted during the development of each AAP in the 5-Year planning period.

**Does this Jurisdiction have any open Brownfields Economic Development Initiative (BEDI) grants?**

No

**[BEDI grantees] Describe accomplishments and program outcomes during the last year.**

N/A

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